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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 AMMAN 001665

SIPDIS

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [KISL](#) [IZ](#) [JO](#)

SUBJECT: JORDANIAN PARLIAMENT SPEAKER BACKS INTERNATIONAL
CONFERENCE TO CHOOSE NEW IRAQI LEADERSHIP

Classified By: Ambassador Edward W. Gnehm for Reasons 1.5 (b), (d)

SUMMARY & COMMENT

1. (C) Abdul Hadi Al-Majali, Speaker of the Lower House of Parliament, told the Ambassador on March 4 that he had been in contact with a group called "The League for the Defense of the Rights of the Iraqi People" regarding a proposed conference comprised of representatives from many different groups in Iraq to choose a new Iraqi leadership structure prior to the June 30 transfer of power. According to Majali, who supported the conference idea, the League consists of a cross-section of Iraqi opinion makers committed to national unity. Like him, they believe that the current Iraqi Governing Council (IGC) does not enjoy real legitimacy within Iraq and that it would be a mistake for the IGC to lead the country after June 30. Majali said that the League is pitching its conference proposal, modeled after the international conference in Germany that selected the Afghani government, in European and Arab capitals, as well as to the United Nations. We understand that CPA and the Department are aware of the League and its proposal from other sources, but this was the first time post had heard of the subject being raised with elements of the GOJ. Our initial inquiry with the MFA turned up no information on the League or its activities in Jordan, but we will continue to track the matter. End Summary & Comment.

NEGATIVE WORDS FOR THE IGC

2. (C) In a March 4 meeting with the Ambassador to discuss issues related to the Jordanian Parliament, Lower House Speaker (and former Ambassador to the U.S.) Abdul Hadi Al-Majali switched the subject to Iraq, saying that he was very concerned with the security situation there and the possibility of civil unrest and instability after the June 30 transfer of power. In Majali's opinion, the vesting of authority in the IGC until the holding of national elections in the future would be unwise as the IGC was not up to the task and did not enjoy broad support or real legitimacy within Iraq. Accordingly, Majali asserted that "something new" was sorely needed.

3. (C) Majali continued that he had been talking with representatives of a group called "The League for the Defense of the Rights of the Iraqi People" about a proposal to select a new Iraqi leadership to replace the IGC until such time as Iraq was ready for national elections. Majali asserted that the League consisted of influential Iraqis, including well-educated academics and professionals, from all major groups within Iraqi society who were committed to unifying Iraq and overcoming religious and ethnic differences. He specifically mentioned a man named "Mazher Delaimi" as one of the League representatives who had contacted him.

LET'S HAVE A CONFERENCE!

4. (C) Majali reported that the League is proposing a large-scale conference outside of Iraq, possibly in Geneva, comprised of over 1,000 representatives drawn from a broad variety of different groups within Iraq to choose a new leadership structure for the country to include a President and/or Prime Minister, Cabinet ministers, and several committees to oversee security, national elections, and other specific subjects. This new leadership would rule Iraq until democratic elections are conducted some time in the future. Majali said the League cited as precedent the international conference in Germany that chose the government of Afghanistan following the fall of the Taliban, and that the League hoped to win UN endorsement of its proposal.

5. (C) Majali told the Ambassador that he strongly supported the League's conference idea and that he had discussed it with King Abdullah (though he did not specify the King's reaction). He characterized the League as a "realistic group" that was confident that its ideas would enjoy strong support inside Iraq. According to Majali, he had also raised the subject with the Chilean head of the International

Parliamentary Union (IPU), which was tentatively planning to sponsor a meeting on March 24 in Amman for the Speakers of parliaments in countries neighboring Iraq (possibly including Iran) to discuss the proposal and other topics related to Iraq. He further said that the League was pitching the conference in some European capitals, including Paris, and had sent formal letters to Arab foreign ministries and to Kofi Annan at the United Nations. Majali asked the Ambassador if the U.S. would be able to support the proposed conference "from a distance."

16. (C) The Ambassador told Majali that it was very important that the conference proposal not conflict with CPA plans and objectives for Iraq. He also inquired if the League had been in touch with Shi'a groups, including Ayatollah Sistani, since any Iraqi national conclave had to be comprehensive and inclusive of all major factions. Majali replied that the League included a Shi'a sheikh but adamantly opined that Sistani should not play a role in choosing Iraq's future government as he was "an Iranian" who took his orders from Tehran. Clerics, he insisted, should not be too deeply involved in politics as this would jeopardize the goal of transcending ethnic and sectarian differences.

SURPRISE AT THE MFA

17. (C) Following the Ambassador's meeting with Majali, PolOff contacted Basheer Zoubi at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs who is responsible for Iraq-related matters in Foreign Minister Muasher's Private Office. Zoubi said he was not aware of the League or of having received any document proposing a conference along the lines described by Majali. Zoubi said he would check with FM Muasher and the head of the Private Office, Ali Al-Ayed, upon their return from Cairo to see if they had any relevant information.

COMMENT

18. (C) Majali's backing for the conference proposal stems most likely from animosity against members of the IGC working against Jordanian interests in Iraq, as well as a sincere belief that it represents the best hope for security and stability in Iraq. Post understands that CPA and the Department are aware of the League and its ideas, but thought it was important to report the League's marketing efforts outside Iraq and the resulting interest in, and inquiries about, the conference proposal if the League's actions in Jordan are repeated elsewhere.

19. (U) Baghdad minimize considered.

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GNEHM